



CHARLES A. FRANCIS  
CHIEF JUDGE

OFFICE OF COURT ADMINISTRATION  
SECOND JUDICIAL CIRCUIT OF FLORIDA  
LEON COUNTY COURTHOUSE  
ROOM 315  
TALLAHASSEE, FLORIDA 32301  
(850) 577-4400 • FAX (850) 487-7947

GRANT SLAYDEN  
COURT ADMINISTRATOR

## MEMORANDUM

To: Alan Rosenzweig, Budget Director  
Leon County Office of Management & Budgeting

From: Grant Slayden, Trial Court Administrator, 2<sup>d</sup> Judicial Circuit *Grant*

Date: 29 December 2003

Subject: Request for Agenda Item for GAL Continuation Funding

As per our discussion on 19 December 2003, below please find our program description, identification of the problem, and statement of need.

"Guardian ad Litem (GAL) provides children with legal representation, preserves their physical safety and well-being, and makes recommendations to the court. They do this using approximately 200 Leon County volunteers who provide more than 40,000 volunteer hours each year. In Fiscal Year 2002-03, GAL represented over 730 Leon County children, most of whom were below 10 years of age, in only the most serious cases of abuse and neglect.

Although volunteer training and management, legal counsel, and expenses for the GAL program were previously funded through a combination of the state and county, GAL funding after January 1, 2004 is to be paid predominately from state funds in accordance with Revision 7 to Article V. However, under the implementation language found in Chapter 2003-53, Laws of Florida, with clarifying dates as specified in Senate Bill 2-A, as adopted, the statewide office of GAL does not come into being until January 1, 2004, making it almost impossible to immediately fund the local GAL programs. Although statewide funds were appropriated by the 2003 Legislature, they did not include funds to cover county-funded positions, space, communications, computers, or in-kind services. Consequently, rather than risk the loss of important services, nearly all of the counties throughout the state have agreed to maintain their GAL funding through June 30, 2004. This action allows the new statewide director of GAL, Angela Orkin, an opportunity to appeal to the Legislature for increased funding and to fix the oversight that omitted any funding for space, communications, and computers, etc.

Memorandum for Alan Rosenzweig  
29 December 2003  
Page 2

The GAL program, through the 2<sup>d</sup> Judicial Circuit of Florida, respectfully requests that county funding and in-kind services be continued through June 30, 2004, as necessary, to ensure that GAL can continue to provide vital services to Leon County children without interruption. County funding includes a part-time employee (0.5 FTE without benefits), contractual services, and the county expense budget, all estimated to total \$25,800.86 for 6 months. In-kind services with little or no marginal cost include courthouse space, related services (electricity, water & housekeeping), two parking spaces (with a \$35 employee contribution per month each), Centrex and Suncom phone services, staff courthouse security badges, computer access (e-mail, internet & MIS support), and the use of computers, office equipment, and furniture. The GAL program, as a stand alone entity, effective January 1, 2004, commits to informing OMB once sufficient state funds are available to continue current operations. This request is consistent with previous Board direction, since the county portion of the GAL budget was fully funded through September 30, 2004. We respectfully request that this discretionary continuation funding be authorized to be utilized.”

CC: Patsy Williams, Chief of Staff  
Marcia Hilty-Reinshuttle, GAL Director

GS/gs